



PETER GELDERLOOS 2024-05-09

## AHEAD OF ANOTHER SUMMER OF CLIMATE DISASTERS, LET'S TALK ABOUT REAL SOLUTIONS

NECROPOLITICS CAPITALISM ASPHYXIA, CATASTROPHE, CLIMATE CRISIS, FOSSIL  
CAPITAL, GREEN TECHNOLOGY

The mainstream climate movement begins from a premise that guarantees failure.

Not just failure. Catastrophe. And the more effective it is, the more harm it will cause.

Let's explore why.

### CLIMATE REDUCTIONISM

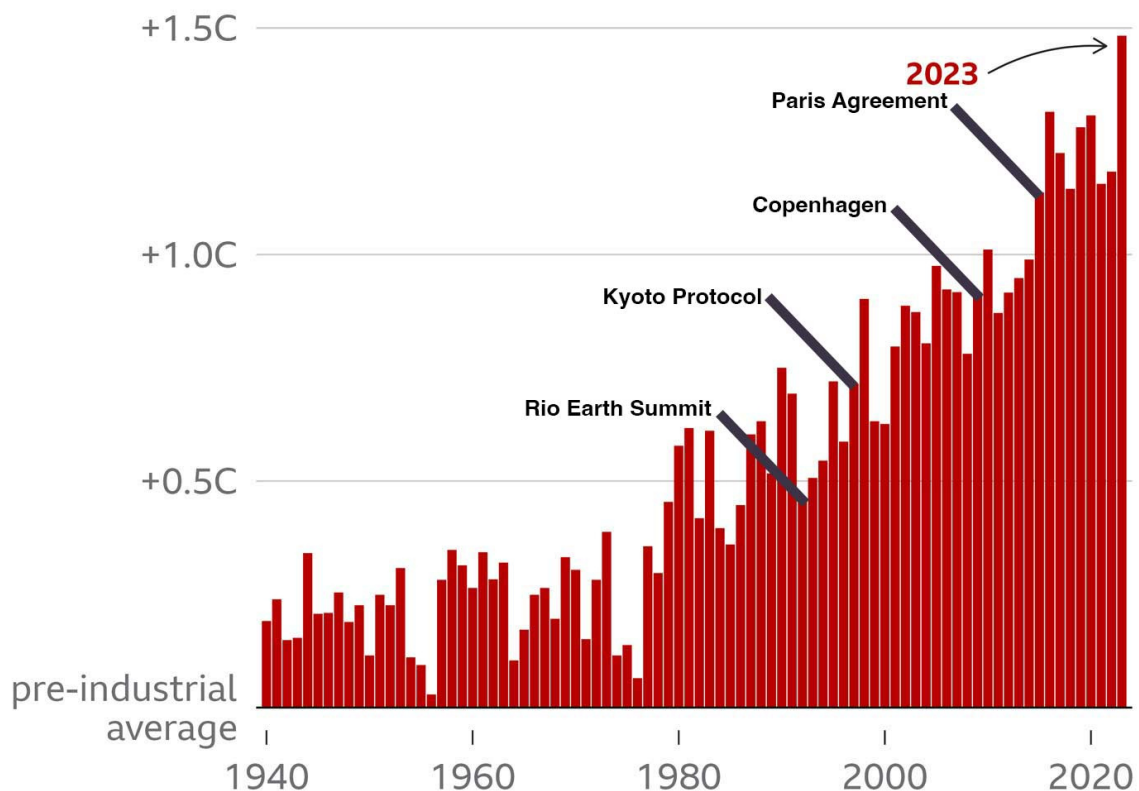
When people think of environmentalism these days, they are likely to picture civil disobedience in the streets, media activism, enthusiastic lobbying, and conferences aiming to set global goals for carbon emissions—all under the leadership of non-governmental organizations, academics, and progressive politicians. Ecological struggle, however, has always also included anti-capitalist and anti-colonial currents, and these currents have been getting stronger, more dynamic, and better connected over the past couple decades.

That growth, however, has not been without setbacks, often caused by intense targeted repression that leaves movements exhausted and traumatized, like the Green Scare that began in 2005 and the repression of Standing Rock and other Indigenous-led anti-pipeline movements a decade later. Systematically, at precisely the moments when radical currents are licking their wounds, the predominantly white, middle-class vision of environmentalism takes the stage and pushes the entire conversation in reformist directions.<sup>1</sup>

The actual crisis we are facing is a complex ecological crisis, in which police killings, repressive laws, ongoing histories of colonialism and white supremacy, habitat loss, land grabs, food cultures, human health, urbanism, borders, and wars are all entangled. The leadership of the environmental movement has made the strategic decision to reduce all of this to a question of climate—the *climate crisis*—and to recenter the state as the protagonist, as our potential savior. This means centering the Paris Agreement and the COP summits as the solution to the problem, and using performative activism and civil disobedience to demand policy shifts and investment in support of green energy.

# Hottest year on record

Global average temperature by year, compared with pre-industrial average (1850-1900)



Source: ERA5, C3S/ECMWF

The climate is heating up, regardless of international climate summits are not helping.

## A PREDICTABLE FAILURE

The two pillars of their strategy for fixing the climate crisis are, first, to increase the production of green energy and, second, to decrease carbon emissions.

They have been highly effective at the first goal, and completely ineffective at the second. This was completely predictable.

Anyone who understands how our society works—which is to say, how capitalism works—knows that the probable result of an increase in green energy investment will be an *increase* in fossil fuel production. The primary reason for this is that the hundreds of billions of dollars that have already been sunk into pipelines and coal mines and oil refineries and fracking rigs are *fixed capital*. They're worth a lot of money, but it's not money in a bank account that can be quickly invested somewhere else, turned into stocks or real estate or converted into a different currency.

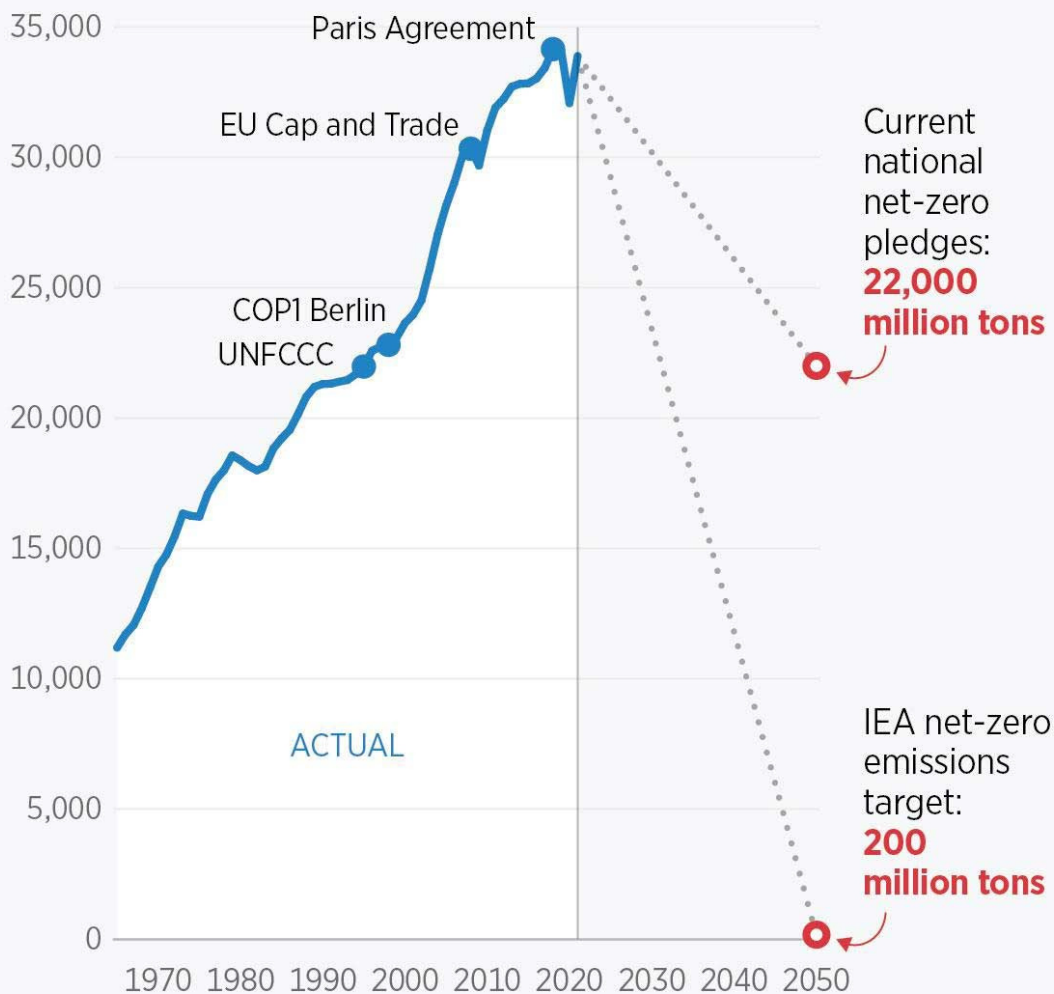
A 14,000-tonne coal excavator, an offshore oil platform: these aren't ever going to become something else of similar financial value. This is money that has been spent, an investment that is only useful to capitalists if they can continue to use it to extract coal or drill for oil. That economic rule holds true whether the capitalist enterprise in question is ExxonMobil, the Saudi state oil company, or the Communist Party-owned China Petrochemical Corporation

(which was listed as the largest energy company in the world in 2021).

Capitalism (including the kind practiced by every socialist government in the world) is based on growth. If green energy investment grows, leading to an increase in total energy production, the price of energy will decrease, which means that large manufacturers will make more of whatever commodities they are producing, rendering their products cheaper in hopes that consumers will buy more of them. Consequently, total energy usage will *increase*. This applies to energy from all available sources, especially the most established ones—fossil fuels.

## Climate Agreements Don't Impact Global CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions

GLOBAL CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS FROM ENERGY USE,  
IN MILLIONS OF TONS



SOURCES: U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, British Petroleum, and International Energy Agency

After decades of investment, green energy will finally become cost-competitive with or

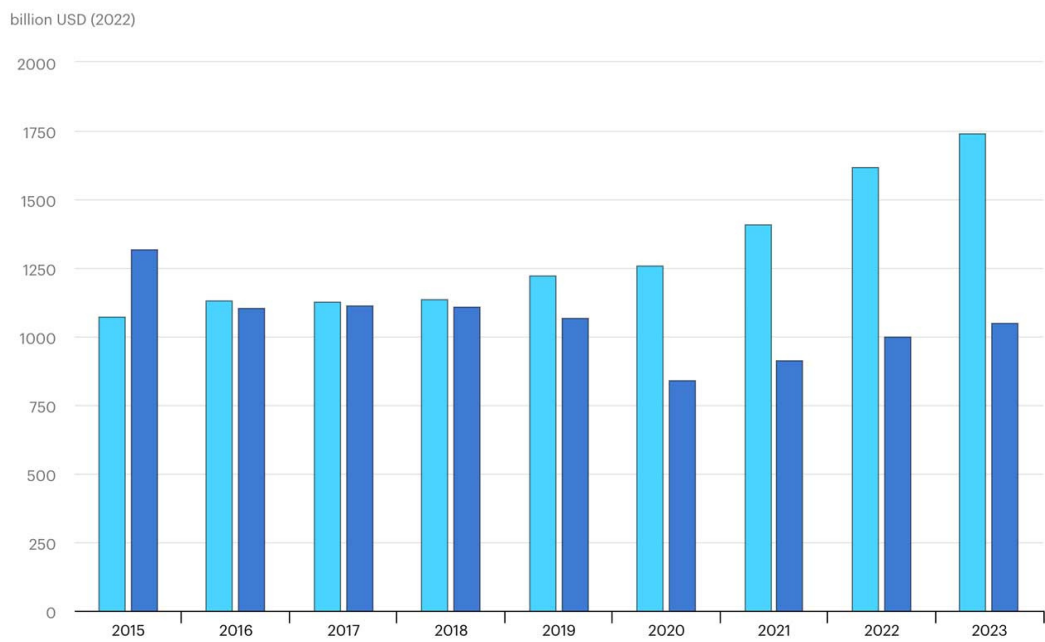
cheaper than energy from fossil fuels. This has only started to occur in the last few years, though prices still fluctuate depending on the region and the type of energy production. The fossil fuel industry has neither abandoned their operations nor decreased production. Many companies won't even hedge their investments between fossil fuels and green energy. What they will do, however, is invest more in new fossil fuel projects. This is basic capitalist economics: if the price margin on a product decreases, the only way to maintain or increase your profits is to increase total production. That explains why 2023 was a banner year for new fossil fuel projects.

There is another way to increase the profits: by decreasing the cost of production. For the fossil fuel industry, that means reducing safety and environmental standards, which means more accidents, more pollution, more deaths.

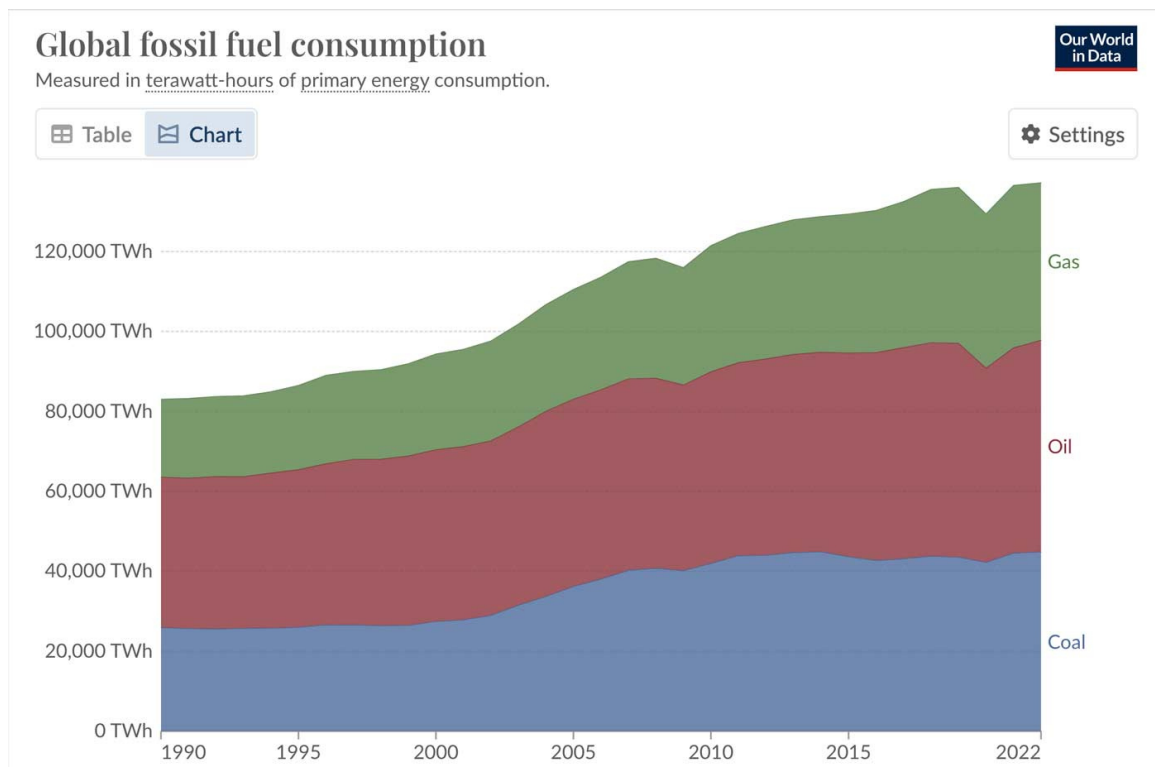
We saw this coming. We said this was happening. And we were excluded from the conversation, in many cases killed or imprisoned, because the desperate need to believe that government can save us is even greater than the addiction to fossil fuels.

But capitalism has no future on this planet. We will need a far-reaching revolution to address this crisis.

Global energy investment in clean energy and in fossil fuels, 2015-2023



For each bar, the light blue bar on the left represents "clean" energy; the dark blue bar on the right represents fossil fuels. Source: The World Energy Investment 2023 report.



Despite yearly investment in “green” energy increasing significantly, fossil fuel production and consumption are also continuing to increase. Source: Statistical Review of World Energy 2023.

## SO WHAT DO WE DO?

We need to shift the conversation. We need to **position ourselves** to be prepared for the long haul. We need to **support struggles** that can bring small victories and increase our collective power, and **deepen our relationship with the territory** that can sustain us. Above all, we need to **imagine better futures** than the one they have in store for us.

## TALK

The kind of social transformation—of global revolution—that can heal the wounds we have inflicted upon the planet itself and all its living systems will have to be bigger than anything we’ve ever experienced. This crisis ensnares and harms all of us; the response is going to require as many of us as possible.

Imagine all of the people in your life that you don’t want to die of starvation, of cancer, in extreme weather events, or shot down by police or other white supremacists.

You don’t need to convince all of those people to become anarchist revolutionaries. It would be enough to convince some of them to withdraw their loyalty from dominant institutions and mainstream reform movements and to sympathize with a revolutionary approach, or at least to understand why such an approach makes sense.

One way you can approach this is by posing a question with an indisputable answer, a question that has direct bearing on an issue that affects them or motivates them. For example:

- How many people die every year from lack of clean water, famine, extreme weather, air pollution, and other causes related to the ecological crisis? **At least 10-20 million people every year, and the number is growing.**

- Since 2017, investment in renewable energy increased every year. In 2022, there was over 15 times as much renewable energy investment as there was in 2004. Has this been profitable for investors? **Yes. Yearly investment is over a trillion dollars, and profits are over a hundred billion, though investors have shown that they will quickly pull their money out of green energy when profit margins go down.** What has happened to global CO2 emissions in this same time period? **They have shot up by a third.** And fossil fuel production in the same time period? **It has increased by 40%.** Are these roughly the same as the rates of increase in carbon emissions and fossil fuel production over the prior decades? **Yes.** And what does that mean? **Booming investment in green energy has not slowed down fossil fuel production and carbon emissions in any way, even as new fossil fuel extraction projects become more difficult and higher cost.**
- Our water, air, and food are filled with poisonous chemicals. Many of these are related to plastics production, pesticides, forever chemicals (PFAS), mining, and the burning of fossil fuels. We have known about the dangers of most of these compounds for decades, and several of them are banned or regulated by various governments. On the whole, are the amounts of these toxins in our environment increasing or decreasing? **They are increasing.** What have many major chemical companies done in response to the banning of PFOA, a toxic "forever chemical"? **They have switched to the production of other PFAS also known or believed to be toxic.** Do we know how effectively these bans are enforced? **Five years after they agreed to phase out PFOA in response to government pressure, DuPont chemical factories were still discharging PFOA into the groundwater. They probably still are now, but affected communities don't have the resources to find out and the government doesn't monitor it.**
- Let's look at a parallel issue, to see if such reformism has delivered results in other contexts. In 2020, cities and states across the US sought to pacify the movement against police killings by passing measures to ensure police accountability, from racial sensitivity trainings to citizen review boards to stricter guidelines on the use of force to obligatory body cameras. Has the number of killings by police decreased since then? **No. It has increased.**

After sharing the answers to these questions, you can emphasize that reforming the existing system is a failed strategy, and ask them if they are committed to trying the same strategy over and over again, hoping for different results.

This should enable you to determine which of the people around you are able to question the paradigm they live in, and which ones are committed to the false beliefs that undergird that paradigm. Do not waste your time on the latter group. Whatever redeeming and beautiful qualities they may have, trying to engage with them via reason, ethics, and logic is missing the point. When people insist on believing things that are demonstrably false, it is either because those beliefs give them comfort or because they bring them power and profit. Debate is unlikely to change that.

We need to change the conversation on the level of society at large. We need people to understand our arguments; we need to make sure that the mainstream orthodoxies will be seen as controversial rather than acceptable.

This means discrediting the Paris Agreement, the United Nations, Extinction Rebellion, and the big NGOs, as well as the entire strategy of replacing fossil fuels with green energy while leaving the global economic system unchanged. The only thing they were ever going to succeed at was making a lot of money. Likewise, we need to popularize a clearer



understanding of the function of police in historical context, and of the impact of growth-based economic production on our health, and the fact that no government is to likely to take steps mitigate any of these harms.

Let's focus on the people who are able to change. When people start to change their minds, it helps if they can connect this with an immediate change in their actions. Help them identify something small that they can do. For example:

- Redirect donations from the big NGOs to legal defense funds for land defenders, fundraisers for land defense projects, and alternative media and publishers that present a realistic view of the crisis;
- Write a letter to someone imprisoned for ecologically-minded sabotage or defending against police, or to someone who is organizing for better treatment and survival resources inside the prison system;
- Spread news on social media about Indigenous land defense struggles around the world;
- Respond to mainstream environmental campaigns or the UN Climate Change framework, pointing out it's a fraud and linking to made-for-mass-circulation articles like this one;
- Ask local libraries and bookstores to order books with a realistic take on the ecological crisis;
- Start a reading group with friends;
- Attend a protest;
- Support a local community garden, a distribution point for free food or clothes, a harm reduction group, or a transformative justice initiative;
- Turn a lawn into a garden for native wildflowers and edibles;
- Experiment with guerrilla gardening.



South Central Farm. Discussed in *Rolling Thunder #4*, this garden in Los Angeles fed hundreds of families, defending a green space in the urban wasteland.

GET HONEST



The apocalypse has already begun. For decades, millions of humans—and now tens of millions of humans—have been dying every year because of the effects of this ecological crisis. We have surpassed the death rates of the worst years of World War II and the Holocaust, even if we don't count the casualty figures from the hot wars that white supremacist powers are waging from Niger to Palestine—though those wars are also wrapped up with this crisis.

What's more, an unknown number of species—probably in the thousands—are being driven to extinction every single year. Numerous habitats and ecosystems are being lost forever. The global biomass, the total mass of all the living beings on the planet, is decreasing substantially. The water, air, and soil are filled with poisons. The climate goals for carbon reduction are probably too optimistic; we are already crossing numerous tipping points 26 years out from 2050 (the UN's goal for reaching “net zero” emissions), and the projections of the most powerful states and biggest corporations indicate that we will fail to meet the wishful 2050 deadline. The end of a world is already underway.

In order to do what we need to do, we need to accept that and get on with it. Suffering is already here. Mass death is already here. But after every death, there is new life, and there will continue to be life on this planet until the sun expands in a few billion years. This is a question of life and death for *us*, so we need to take it seriously and make sacrifices, but since it's already “too late,” we can focus on quality and long-term framings, rather than being driven by a superficial and exhausting urgency.

At least one thing is certain: the living communities on this planet will be in much better shape if we abolish the state and capitalism. If we don't succeed in our lifetimes, they will still be better off—we will be better off—if we have eroded their hegemony, if most people can see that the dominant institutions are responsible for what is happening, if we have increased our capacity for collective healing and survival.



## GET STARTED

There are many ways to support a struggle. Although it is easy to get demoralized when most of the pipelines, military bases, mines, and other mega-projects we oppose are built nonetheless, it is vital to engage. Revolution is not a linear progression—it is not a thousand little victories that accumulate into one big victory. Yes, it is necessary to show that sometimes we can win, but it's also about the joy and the experience that we take away with us, the tactical and strategic instincts we develop, the technical know-how, the relationships we build, the elation of forcing the police to turn tail and run, the realization that authority figures inside and outside the movement only hold us back, the way that in struggle it becomes clear that all the different siloed issues, all the different forms of oppression, are connected.

We need to engage in intermediate struggles in a way that will help people discover and practice the sorts of tactics and strategies that will be necessary for long-term change.

Many struggles over the past decades have energized us and taught us lessons we should never forget—the insurrections in Oaxaca, Greece, France, Hong Kong, and Chile, the decentralized assemblies of the plaza occupation movement, the uncompromising antiracism of the anti-police rebellions, the joyful reclamation of public space expressed by Reclaim the Streets, forest occupations from Hambach to Khimki, the strategic stand of Stop Cop City, and more.

## DIG IN

Survival started yesterday. People in countries that have already experienced collapse, as well as Indigenous and underclass Black communities around the world, are already ahead of the curve. Learn from those who come from those experiences. Then get to know your territory

intimately. Learn where food could come from and what modifications the housing will need during the most extreme seasons if the power grid goes off. Establish methods of communication and coordination for when phones and internet connections are no longer working. Learn how you can access clean drinking water. Learn where the soil is most contaminated so no one grows food in it. Learn how coordinated the white supremacists are.

And then get to work creating more community food resources, stabler access to housing, and more collective self-defense networks. Support any project that inspires you and makes us all stronger both right now and in any likely future, whether collapse, increasing authoritarianism, or revolutionary civil war.

Connecting with our specific territories will probably mean breaking with homogenizing ideologies that insist we are all the same, that cannot account for the fact that we all have different histories and needs and that those histories put some of us in conflict, or that base their idea of social transformation on a predetermined program or some idea of obligatory unity. The future we need to be creating is an ecosystem with no center.

## DREAM BIG

Revolution is still possible. We can say this confidently because history shows us certain patterns as it cycles through the centuries, and also because we are entering a time that is unprecedented, in which the dominant institutions are using plans and models that are already obsolete.

All of our revolutions in the last few centuries have ultimately been failures. That means that we can learn from them without shutting down our imaginations or assuming that we know what a successful transformation of all society will look like.

It will not come from a blueprint. It will not be the result of the triumph of any party. It will be the outcome of countless dreams, plans, conspiracies, mad hopes, and battles we cannot yet foresee. We will make it together, constantly dreaming, constantly weaving, because that is what free life is.

1. I discuss global examples of this repression—and how it is systematically linked to the replacement of radical movements by reformist currents—in *The Solutions Are Already Here: Strategies for Ecological Revolution from Below* and *They Will Beat the Memory Out of Us: Forcing Nonviolence on Forgetful Movements*. ↩

taken from Crimethinc: <https://de.crimethinc.com/2024/05/08/ahead-of-another-summer-of-climate-disasters-lets-talk-about-real-solutions>

← PREVIOUS   NEXT →

---

### META

CONTACT

FORCE-INC/MILLE PLATEAUX

IMPRESSUM

DATENSCHUTZERKLÄRUNG

TAXONOMY

CATEGORIES

TAGS

AUTHORS

ALL INPUT

SOCIAL

FACEBOOK

INSTAGRAM

TWITTER